(c) if so, the details thereof and whether Government propose to provide soldiers with new technology rifles; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) The INSAS rifle was developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) based on Army's Qualitative Requirements. It was inducted into the Army after extensive trials in the year 1996-1997. Since inception, design of rifle, has undergone five modifications as per user's requirement to make it more user-friendly. The Ordnance Factory Board is supplying INSAS rifles duly proved and accepted by the Director General Quality Assurance (DGQA), an agency designated by the Defence Forces. The rifle tested for its quality, safety and strength, operational requirements and other rigorous tests as per the stipulated standards laid down by DGQA.

(c) and (d) With the change in the operational environment and to keep pace with new technology, Qualitative Requirements for a New Generation Assault Rifle of current technology have been spelt out by the Army.

Security checks in the southern coastal areas

1983. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
SHRI N. K. SINGH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has recently directed the Navy and Coast Guard to maintain a high state of alert in the Southern Coastal areas;

(b) if so, whether illegal infiltration from the Southern Coastal areas have increased in the past few months;

(c) if so, the facts and details thereof; and

(d) to what extent the Navy and Coast Guard have maintained security checks in the Southern Coastal areas?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) The Indian Navy (IN) and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) always remain in a state of readiness to protect the country's coastal waters, including thwarting any attempt at infiltration. While no specific report about any illegal infiltration from the southern coastline of the country has been received, the coastal waters of the country are guarded by the ICG and the IN in coordination with the State Police and other agencies like Customs through various means including aerial surveillance, maritime patrolling etc.

Procedural delays in Defence Procurements

1984. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI TARIQ ANWAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Minister acknowledged need to keep pace with changing technology and system as pointed out that there was a need to cut red tape and procedural delays in country's procurement mechanism for the armed forces;

(b) if so, whether Defence Ministry surrendered Rs.7000 crores this fiscal year which was highest in five years;

(c) if so, what were main reasons therefor;

(d) whether red tape was one of the reasons for delay in defence purchases; and

(e) if so, to what extent Government has taken steps in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (e) Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) aims to ensure expeditious procurement of approved requirements of the Armed Forces in terms of capability sought within the time-frames prescribed by optimally utilizing allocated budgetary resources. There is a provision to review the procurement procedure after every two years. It has now been decided that in order to infuse greater transparency and to encourage involvement of indigenous industry in defence procurement and to keep pace with changing times, a review of DPP may be undertaken annually.

During the financial year 2008-2009, a cut of Rupees 7000 crores (approximately) was imposed by Ministry of Finance at the Revised Estimates stage and it was not a surrender by Ministry of Defence.

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

1985. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has taken the initiative to bring together littoral States in the region on the issue of regional maritime environmental protection under the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium;

(b) whether the US and UK have sought observers status at Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and whether a similar request from China is pending; and

(c) whether the United Arab Emirates has agreed to host the second IONS in 2010, and if so, the agenda thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) With a view to achieving a state of security, safety and stability in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) has been launched by the Indian Navy with navies (and maritime security organizations in respect of countries who do not have any formal Navy) of the IOR.

(b) While the navies of UK and USA have forwarded requests seeking 'Observer' status in IONS, no such request has been received from the Chinese Navy.

(c) United Arab Emirates (UAE) has agreed to host the IONS in the year 2010. The agenda for this meet has not been finalized.

Estimated value for defence procurement

1986. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state: